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SUBJECT: MEETING WITH TURKISH OFFICIALS ON NUCLEAR
SMUGGLING OUTREACH INITIATIVE

REF: STATE 172634

¶1. (SBU) We have been working intensively with the MFA Disarmament and Arms Control Directorate to organize reftel meeting on the Nuclear Smuggling Outreach Initiative. MFA officials have displayed great interest in having these initial discussions. However, citing staff turnover and a number of competing commitments, they have requested we postpone this initial meeting until early in 2007.

¶2. (SBU) MFA Disarmament and Arms Control Directorate officials have cited a number of competing priorities during the remainder of 006, including: participation in the PSI OEG eeting in Montreal next month, preparing to host the second meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism in the first half of February 2007, UN First Committee issues, and issues associated with MTCR, Wassenaar, Australian Group and NPT. The office is developing Turkish policy with regard to the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs. This small office has recently experienced a 50 percent turnover of personnel and Deputy Director General Bulent Meric will be departing in mid-December for a new assignment.

¶3. (SBU) MFA officials insist that Turkey is interested in an information exchange on nuclear smuggling, but wishes to ensure a productive initial meeting based on the availability of key staff and sufficient time. As a result, we may wish to offer the GOT possible dates early in the new year, allowing the MFA sufficient time to prepare the successful meeting they claim to want.

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